

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action mailed February 27, 2008, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider the above-captioned application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Allowed Claims

Claims 1, 2 and 31 have been allowed.

Response to §112 Rejection

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. As noted in the Interview Summary, the Examiner has agreed to remove the §112 rejection of this claim.

Claims 3-8, 28, 29 and 32-34

The Examiner rejected Claims 3-8, 28, 29 and 32-34 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0170570 to Bergman. Claims 3-7 have each been amended, and currently define over the cited reference.

Bergman (Figure 14) teaches a winding gear 22 that is presumably the same as the winding gear 22 described in connection with the other figures and embodiments. Such a winding gear 22 has serrations 44 on its periphery, and a ratchet arm 46 supported within the device cooperates with the serrations so that the winding gear rotates in only one direction (see Figure 5 and ¶[0039]).

Bergman does not teach or suggest all of the limitations of Claim 3 as amended. For example, Bergman does not teach or suggest a series of ratchet receiver members integrally formed with a wall of the housing. Further, Bergman doesn't teach the recited advancement mechanism, which comprises a ratcheting member adapted to engage the series of ratcheting receiver members that are integrally formed with the wall of the housing, the ratcheting member being biased outwardly and hinged so that the ratcheting member is moveable over the receiver members only in a first direction and not in a second, generally opposite direction.

Since Bergman does not teach or suggest all of the limitations of amended Claim 3, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner remove the rejection of this claim.

Claims 4-8 and 34 depend from patentable Claim 3, and recite additional patentable subject matter. For example, Claim 5 additionally recites that the rotatable member (see Claim

4) comprises a guard that extends radially outward from the axle and rotates with the axle, the guard being spaced from the wheel, and wherein the floss from the return path is wound about the axle between the wheel and the guard. Further, Claim 6 additionally recites an arrangement in which the guard is interposed between the floss supply path and the return path floss that is wound about the axle. Claim 7 has been amended to increase its clarity without substantially changing its scope, and recites an arrangement in which the return path minimum width is greater than the supply path minimum width. Claim 34 as amended additionally recites that the ratchet receiver members are integrally formed on a wall of the housing that is generally transverse to a longitudinal axis of the rotatable member axle and are arranged in a generally circular array.

The cited art does not teach or suggest structure like that recited in Claim 3 or as additionally recited in the dependent claims just discussed. Applicants thus respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of these claims.

With regard to Claims 28, 29 and 32-34, the Examiner contends that Bergman teaches the previously-recited truss structure. Applicants have amended Claim 28 to increase its structural clarity. Claim 28 as amended recites structure that is clearly not taught or suggested by the cited references. For example, Claim 28 now recites a housing having an outer wall extending circumferentially about a longitudinal axis, a stop mechanism comprising, *inter alia*, a front stop wall and a rear stop wall, and at least one of the front and rear stop walls is part of an enclosed truss structure, the truss structure comprising at least two ribs that extend generally transversely and longitudinally from the corresponding stop wall, and the truss structure being enclosed within the housing outer wall.

Bergman does not teach or suggest at least these limitations. As such, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of this claim.

Claims 29 and 32 have been cancelled without prejudice, and Claims 30 and 33 have been amended to correspondingly change their dependency. Claim 33 has been further amended to recite more specific structural aspects. These dependent claims recite additional patentable subject matter to that recited in Claim 28, from which they depend. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of these claims as well.

New Claims

New Claim 35 depends from Claim 34 and recites further patentable features related to the ratcheting mechanism. These features are not taught or suggested in the cited references, and are currently considered to be in condition for allowance.

New Claim 36 is an independent claim. Although this claim recites subject matter that has some similarities with the invention recited in Claims 5 and/or 6, this new claim is independent and has significantly different claim scope. Claims 37-40 depend from new Claim 36 and recite additional patentable subject matter.

No Disclaimers or Disavowals

Although the present communication may include alterations to the application or claims, or characterizations of claim scope or referenced art, the Applicants are not conceding in this application that previously pending claims are not patentable over the cited references. Rather, any alterations or characterizations are being made to facilitate expeditious prosecution of this application. The Applicants reserve the right to pursue at a later date any previously pending or other broader or narrower claims that capture any subject matter supported by the present disclosure, including subject matter found to be specifically disclaimed herein or by any prior prosecution. Accordingly, reviewers of this or any parent, child or related prosecution history shall not reasonably infer that the Applicants have made any disclaimers or disavowals of any subject matter supported by the present application.

Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the rejections and objections set forth in the outstanding Office Action are inapplicable to the present claims and specification. Accordingly, early issuance of a Notice of Allowance is most earnestly solicited.

The undersigned has made a good faith effort to respond to all of the rejections in the case and to place the claims in condition for immediate allowance. Nevertheless, if any undeveloped issues remain or if any issues require clarification, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call Applicants' attorney in order to resolve such issue promptly.

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Application No.: 10/805,766
Filing Date: March 22, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: 7/5/08

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